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ABSTRACT

Business and industry support education in their communities in many ways, and financial gifts are only one of them. Business, industry, labor, government, and foundations are involved in financial support through grants, fellowships, scholarships, awards, endowments, loans, donations of time and services, and donation of teaching aids, materials, and equipment. Business and industry gain an improved work force, tax deductions, visibility in the community, and satisfaction of the sense of social responsibility. Federal legislation has sought to support vocational education actively, but it has also sought to use limited federal dollars to leverage maximum matching funds from private and other public sources. State sources of financial incentives include players from education and employment agencies. Contributions from business and industry can fall into any of the categories of the major and minor costs that partnerships encounter. Private foundations may also fund partnership activities, if the appeal is couched in terms of the foundation's interests. (A list of 23 references is appended. Two appendixes contain a list of ways business benefits from partnership and a principal's "wish list" of types of support.) (YLB)

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by
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Financial Incentives for Business-Education Partnerships

"Partnerships use time and expertise of volunteers, not money."[1]

This assertion by the Hoosiers for Economic Development Committee is overstated, but it reflects the fact that business-education partnerships accomplish a great deal even when they do not directly involve outlays of cash. Business and industry support education in their communities in many ways, and financial gifts are only one of them. For example, businesses and schools regularly exchange personnel and in-kind services. But the National Center for Research in Vocational Education reports that business, industry, labor, government and foundations are involved in financial support through "grants, fellowships, scholarships, awards, endowments, loans, donations of time and services, and donation of teaching aids, materials and equipment."[2]

According to the U.S. Department of Education, the number of business-education partnerships in the nation stood at more than 140,800 at the end of the 1987-88 school year.[3] More than 9 million students -- nearly one in five of the children in the nation's public schools -- were participating. The department reported that 57 percent of the schools received only goods and services from their partners. Twenty-two percent received money only, and 21 percent received both. "Compared to 1983-84 figures, these statistics reflect that the partnership movement is evolving toward more and more personal involvement," the department stated.[4] But when school principals were asked what kind of support they wanted most, money items -- more student awards, scholarships and incentives -- headed the list. Right behind was donations of computers, equipment and books.[5]

Cetron says business-education partnerships go back at least to the 1860s, when New York City's Chamber of Commerce had representatives on the board of the Merchant Marine Technical School.[6] (In the early 1980s, it still did.)What is a business-education partnership? According to the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, one working definition is "a continued, cooperative effort of two or more institutions in which each partner shares in the designing of projects and programs planned to meet a mutual need and contributes a part of the resources needed."[7]

The players vary quite widely. "Business" generally includes corporations, local businesses, retail stores, trade or agriculture associations and government. But community organizations and service clubs also are active partners with their local education systems. "Education" generally means high schools or post-secondary schools, especially vocational-technical schools and colleges. Today, from Atlanta to Portland, thousands of American businesses have adopted thousands of schools. In Indianapolis, every high school and junior high school has a business partner, and 34 of 47 elementary schools do as well. Their business partners range from multinational corporations such as IBM, Xerox, and Ford to local and regional businesses such as Hook's Drug Stores, American Cablevision of Indianapolis and the Indianapolis Indians Baseball Team. Also among the partners are the Kiwanis and Jaycees and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).[8]

Schools rarely make direct grants, in money or materials, to business or industry. When it comes to short-term financial incentives, the exchange usually is in the other direction. The Indiana Partners in Education Program lists 20 ways that business benefits from partnerships, but none of the items involves a direct cash transaction, and only one or two seem to have potential for immediate short-term impact on the corporate bottom line.[9] Business and industry usually take the long-term view of partnerships, seeing aid to education as an investment in the future. The goal is to improve the quality of the area work force. Still, there are significant short-term dividends. Those include the opportunity to recruit top graduates, to enjoy tax deductions and to gain a healthy visibility in the community. Taking the longer view, partnerships give business and industry continuing input into the local educational system. They also may satisfy the corporate sense of social responsibility or even philanthropy. Partnerships typically benefit schools more directly. In Indiana and around the nation, businesses offer schools not only money and materials but tutors, opportunities for job shadowing, field trips, internships for teachers or students, part-time or summer work for teachers or students, and use of multi-million dollar machines.

Cetron believes that in the future, business and education will be vital to each other's prosperity -- and even survival:[10]

"Partnerships between businesses and schools will be a pervasive part of the daily operations in most school districts by the 21st century. Many schools will depend on businesses for a large part of their funding, staff and equipment. In addition, many schools will use the workplace to train students in specific job skills, whether students intend to go to college or take on full-time jobs after they graduate. Businesses will depend on schools to update the training of their current workers and provide experienced high school graduates for future employment needs."

Financial incentives

Earlier in the decade, The Conference Board, which tracks corporate support of education, reported that business and industry gave an estimated $1.3 billion to schools. Manufacturing and insurance gave 0.5 percent of pretax income to education. Engineering and construction accounted for 41.4 percent of corporate giving. The major contributions went to colleges. The figures for secondary schools are more difficult to come by; few secondary school systems keep such records.

The National Center for Research in Vocational Education provides some idea of the wide range of forms that purely financial incentives may take:[11]

- Unrestricted gifts.
- Donations for specific programs.
- Donations to scholarship funds.
- Fellowships (study topics may be restricted to donor's area of interest).
- Mini-grants to teachers.
- Internships for teachers.
- Internships for students.
- Summer jobs for teachers.
- Summer jobs for students.
- Co-op student jobs.
- Funding to attend professional, technical or trade association meetings.
- Tuition-free participation in business-sponsored management or technical-training courses.
- Foundation grants (for research, a study, capital purchase).
- Government grant or contract.
- Endowment.

Sources: the federal government

As the list indicates, sources of financial incentives include federal and state government in the public sector and businesses and foundations in the private sector. In practice, it makes little sense to discuss those separately. Typically, federal legislation creates seed money that is allocated by state agencies to help local business and schools design partnership projects (and other vehicles) to meet government goals as well as their own. In the '80s, federal law has sought to support vocational education actively, but it also has sought to employ limited federal dollars in ways that would leverage

maximum matching funds from private and other public sources.[12] As a result, one useful strategy is to look for financial incentives in the areas targeted by federal initiatives.

For example, the Job Training Partnership Act of 1982 contained special provisions for economically disadvantaged youth and unskilled adults.[13] Near Pittsburgh, the Elliott Company, a manufacturer of compressors and turbines, used funds from the federal Job Opportunity in the Business Sector (JOBS) program to create a vocational education center that would turn out badly needed skilled metal workers. The trainees were disadvantaged and unskilled workers, whose tuition was paid by private industry councils and the Veterans Administration. In Milwaukee, the Milwaukee Area Technical College received hardware and funds to develop new courses from manufacturers such as the Allen-Bradley Company. Allen-Bradley, which was expanding its computer-aided design capability, was a heavy user of the college's training for computer-based information processing, engineering and manufacturing. Allen-Bradley and other companies hire the college's teachers to help ensure that they have workplace experience.

In 1984, Congress renewed its public commitment to vocational training with the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act. The Perkins Act seeks to help business and the vocational education community deal effectively with rapid change in the workplace, especially in high-technology occupations, and to ensure access to federal funds by groups with special needs, in particular groups that were not adequately served by such legislation in the past. Good candidates for incentive funds are partnerships and other efforts that seek to help aduits who need training or retraining and that deal with training for high-technology jobs. Other targeted groups are the handicapped, the economically disadvantaged, single parents and convicted criminals.

Federal support assumes many forms. The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, available in any repository of federal documents, identifies these:

- Block grants to state or other government units and disbursed according to established priorities.
- Categorical grants available for projects in certain areas.
- Project grants awarded on the merit of proposals by individuals or organizations.
- Formula grants distributed in proportions established by law.
- Research grants to test hypotheses in basic or applied research.
- Demonstration grants to show the effectiveness of an approach.
- Development grants that act as seed money to explore the utility of a concept.
- Training grants to institutions, organizations or individuals for training or development of new skills.
- Staffing grants for in-service training.

Announcements of requests for proposals can be monitored through the Federal Register and Commerce Business Daily.

One incentive not in the list is tax credits. The U.S. Internal Revenue Service offers a tax credit to firms that hire workers in target populations. Workers who qualify include those referred by a vocational rehabilitation program, economically disadvantaged youth and general assistance and Supplemental Security Income recipients. The IRS provides a tax break on up to $6,000 of the first year's wages. The new employees must be certified by the Indiana Employment Security Division as disadvantaged.

Sources: the state government

State sources of financial incentives include players from education and employment agencies. An important thrust of the Perkins Act was to get the education and employment communities to work more closely together, so it is not surprising that they team up in many areas. For example, The Indiana Partners in Education Program makes grants and technical assistance available to counties and communities interested in developing partnerships with goals that match federal and state objectives. It is a project of the Indiana Economic Development Council, funded by The Indiana Commission on Vocational and Technical Education, the state Department of Education and the state Department of Employment and Training Services. Its grants normally must be matched with an in-kind or cash contribution. Since August 1986, the program has granted $281,495 and raised $761,563 in cash and in-kind matches. More than 32,700 students have been served.[14]

In Starke County, where only one in three adults has completed high school, three school systems, businesses and the Kankakee Valley Job Training Program teamed up with Partners in Education to offer students career and life planning. Under the program funded by the Kankakee Valley Job Training Program, the high school students produced videotapes about careers and showed them to other high school students and adults through a cable television channel. An evaluation five months later showed that from one-fourth to three-fourths of the students had raised expectations about careers after high school.

The Chamber of Commerce in Elkhart provides the funds for another Partners in Education program that has fostered 20 partnerships in the Elkhart, Baugo, Concord and Middlebury school districts. The partners seek to encourage students to extend their education and training beyond high school.

In a Partners in Education project that had a definite payoff for the business partner, computer math students at Emmerich Manual High School developed software that saved scientists at Eli Lilly Company nearly two hours a day compiling research data.

Partners in Education has estimated that the value of the time that business people volunteer throughout the state is $1 million a year.

Support direct from state offices often proves difficult to monitor systematically. Dieffenderfer et al. suggest finding the coordinators of state and federal funding in the state Department of Education. They suggest keeping in contact with local legislators who may sponsor bills that can help and following developing legislation on education. They recommend reviewing the state budget for opportunities. The state vocational education plan is a likely source of ideas for programs that might be funded on the basis of state priorities or as a way of distributing discretionary funds made available by the U.S. Commissioner of Education.[15]

Sources: business

Communities, businesses and schools can be eligible to tap financial incentives provided by federal and state sources, but businesses often are a source by themselves. The experience of school systems across the nation suggests that contributions from business and industry can fall into any of the categories of the major and minor costs that partnerships encounter. The largest cost usually is that of a partnership coordinator and any staff. The contribution may involve release time for the "linker" and substitutes for support-staff members when they are working on partnership activities. Donations to help with support services could include a small budget for school-business volunteers or the costs of vehicles, equipment and supplies such as paper, postage, printing, copying and telephone.

The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in Portland, Ore., reported the following categories of actual practices in the Pacific Northwest.[16] Many have counterparts in Indiana.

Visits to trade shows: Local dealers sponsor a student delegation or provide complimentary tickets to a nearby business and industry product fair. Vendor displays represent a convenient opportunity to introduce students to technological innovations in the marketplace.

Loaned personnel: Schools and colleges help stretch budgets with shared-time personnel to teach classes. The Private Initiatives in Public Education program in Seattle helped arrange for an electronics technician to teach high school classes. A loaned executive can provide double value by using community contacts to obtain donated equipment, materials and other human resources.

Sponsorship of events: Local businesses or industries that want to promote technological literacy underwrite an Olympics of the Mind, Science Fair, Free Enterprise Days or another way of recognizing achievements of the kind of youth they would like to have in the work force. In Washington and Oregon, summer Business Weeks at area universities provide an opportunity for business leaders to interact with high school students. Scholarships for students and teachers often are available at such events.

Sponsorship of organizations: Future Farmers of America, the Office Education Association, Vocational-Industrial Clubs of America and Junior Achievement are nationally known groups that are supported in substantial part by contributions from business and industry.

Junior Achievement of Central Indiana conducts an Applied Economics course for partner schools, during which students create their own businesses. Junior Achievement supplies textbooks and other study materials and links a community business leader with a high school economics teacher in the one-semester course. The business consultant teaches once a week, instructing the class on local economic and business conditions and supervising the firm. The consultant's firm pays $850 of the cost of the course; Junior Achievement pays the remaining $250. The student businesses compete with others around the nation, and the best annual report wins student officers, teacher and consultant free round-trip airline tickets to Dallas. In Texas, the group is given a tour of American Airlines, which picks up the tab for the trip.

Internships: Teachers obtain part-time or summer work in businesses or industries that know they are helping to bring the reality of the workplace into the classroom.

Enrollment in industry classes: Students or faculty enroll in corporate-sponsored training on a space-available basis. The training can be highly technical, but it may represent a significant opportunity for the right student or teacher.

Donated equipment: Directors of vocational skills centers in Washington state list computers, small engines, new automobiles with high-technology parts and motorcycles as equipment available for the asking. In some cases, recent graduates of the schools working at potential donor companies have proved effective liaisons. In many states, legislation encourages such donations.

Financial support: Foundations created by schools (even elementary or high schools) accept direct grants from corporations. A board of directors allocates funds to high priority areas, while private-sector donors take the tax break for aiding education.

Awards for excellence: Cash and scholarships are forms that awards to outstanding students, teachers or community volunteers take. The Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce has corporate sponsors that provide incentives such as free sports tickets to students who compile excellent attendance records. Business or industry also may underwrite a recognition banquet to say a public thanks to volunteers or members of advisory committees.

Materials and software: Donations of parts manuals and repair guides are one way that automotive dealers make a contribution to the local education system's ability to turn out work force entrants who need minimum on-the-job training. Computer programs actually used in a business provide a realistic hands-on demonstration of what students will encounter in the world of work. Such direct donations also show students that reading and math skills are an everyday part of life in service or manufacturing jobs.

Specific tasks: Cetron cites the example of a volunteer 1,500-member task force of business and school representatives and citizens who polled residents of a North Carolina county. With 92 percent of residents responding, 59 percent said they would support a tax hike to improve math, reading and computer education in the public schools.[17] In Salina, Kan., Roosevelt-Lincoln Junior High School received more than $8,000 from businesses and individuals to help implement a new teacher-training program.[18] The Cincinnati community gave more than $400,000 in one year to supplement funding from the Board of Education for a magnet school, the High School for Creative and Performing Arts.

Indiana Ideas

In Indianapolis, Special Project Partnerships give students hands-on experience. In the home building project at Arsenal Technical High School, students build and sell a new home every year, with guidance from architectural, construction, legal and financial firms. The partners provide supplies, technical knowledge, equipment and legal and professional services. The house is sold, and proceeds are used to pay for materials and outside labor. Any "profit" goes back into a fund for future projects. More than 500 students have participated during the program's six years.[19]

The Indianapolis Partners in Education Program, an affiliate of the city's Chamber of Commerce, has broken the possibilities out by subject areas.[20] A sampling:

Art. Art projects from the partner school are displayed at the company. Employees vote for their favorites and awards are given. The company offers to buy the winners. The art may be used in the company's holiday greetings, postcards and logos.

Economics. To learn about inventory, marketing, bookkeeping, purchasing and profit, students run a school store. The company supplies training and the funds to buy the opening inventory.

Health. To help fight the threat of suicide among employees and students, the company hires a consultant to work with school counselors in developing materials and support groups. The company hires counselors to implement the program.

Industrial arts. Company experts judge student industrial arts projects. The company provides a gift for the winner.

Science. The company and school sponsor a high-technology fair, where students can display their abilities. Parents and students of others schools are invited.

Cooperation between company and school need not be limited to school subjects. For example:

Facilities. The company needs a place to hold a conference. During spring break, it uses the school. In return, the company offers to paint or decorate three rooms with some of the money it saved because it did not have to rent a hotel conference room.

Staff development. The company pays the fees for a teacher to attend a workshop with one of its technicians, and the two help each other. The company needs summer replacements; teachers get summer jobs in areas they teach. The company enters a Corporate Challenge running event; the school's coaching staff helps with training, and the home economics staff assists with a nutrition plan.

Sources: foundations

Private foundations, often linked to major corporations, also may fund partnership activities, if the appeal is couched in terms of the foundation's interests. Among foundations active in the vocational education area in a recent issue of *Federal Grants & Contracts Weekly* were:

The Mott Foundation, Flint, Mich., (313) 238-5651.
Kellogg Foundation, Battle Creek, Mich., (616) 968-1611.
Clark Foundation, New York City, (212) 986-7050.
Exxon Foundation, Florham Park, N.J., (201) 765-3004

In Indiana, a source of incentives is the Citizens Scholarship Foundation of America. The foundation helps communities set up scholarship foundations to help students in the community with post-secondary education. For a $50 fee, the foundation helps set up steering and fund-raising committees, provides guide books, and offers legal advice about the structure of tax-exempt foundations. The foundation is funded in Indiana by the Lilly Foundation and has 48 chapters in the state. The foundation also works with businesses to set up scholarship funds for the children of their employees.

One way to gauge the possibilities of foundation support is through the Foundation Center (offices in New York City, Washington, D.C., Cleveland and San Francisco), publishers of the Foundation Directory. The directory indexes foundations, their interests and details of past grant behavior and how to apply.

In conclusion

Cetron believes that one day, schools will be able to generate funds by selling services to businesses directly. "In the future, schools will not only look to businesses as sources of equipment and personnel on loan. They will also regard businesses as sources of income as they provide training and retraining services for businesses and their workers."[21] In Orlando, Florida, the public secondary schools train Disneyworld employees in the maintenance of animated figures. They also provide training for police. In 1982, business spent $60 billion in training, nearly $2 billion in remedial training. At present, corporations train in house or turn to community colleges and universities. But there's nothing to keep secondary public schools from being competitive.

Wanat and Snell agree. "Industry and business people will teach full or part time in the public schools. Schools will develop special programs to select those who will best be able to teach. Businesses will provide schools with equipment, personnel and some funds -- money paid for services."[22]

Cetron goes further: "If businesses don't take the first step (in forming partnership planning groups), schools should do so as a matter of their own survival. Without the tax base of a healthy business sector, schools will be unable to grow and flourish."[23]

Sources

1. Dwyer, Margaret M. Indiana Partners in Education Handbook. Indianapolis: Hoosiers for Economic Development Committee, 1985, 5.

2. Dieffenderfer, Richard A.; Lee Kopp; and Orest Cap. Program Support. Business-Industry-Labor Linkages. A Handbook for Improving Personnel Development Programs. Columbus, Ohio: The Center for Vocational Education, 1977, 8.1.

3. U.S. Department of Education. America's Schools: Everybody's Business. Washington, D.C.: Department of Education, 1988, 7.

4. Ibid., 10.

5. National Center for Education Statistics. Education Partnerships in Public Schools. Department of Education, in press, 11. Cited in America's Schools. The full principal's "wish list" is at Appendix B.

6. Cetron, Marvin. Schools of the Future. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1985.

7. Hemmings, Madeleine B. Next Steps in Public-Private Partnerships. Columbus, Ohio: National Center for Research in Vocational Education, Occasional Paper No. 103, 1984, 1.

8. The figures are supplied by the Indiana Partners in Education Program.

9. No. 16 notes that businesses may "use the physical fitness and athletic facilities of the school partners," allowing them to offer a competitive benefit without the cost of buying employees memberships in commercial fitness facilities. Such agreements also could reduce a company's cost of insurance. In Indianapolis, Hook's Drug Stores has entered into such a partnership with Buck Elementary School. See Appendix A for the full list.

10. Op. cit., 85.

11. Dieffenderfer et al., op. cit., 8.7-8.14.

12. National Alliance of Business. Explanation and Analysis of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act. Washington, D.C.: National Alliance of Business, 1985, 1-2.

13. Hassan Salah S. Private Sector Involvement in Vocational Education. Columbus, Ohio: The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, 1986.

14. Dwyer, op. cit., 12.

15. Dieffenderfer et al., op. cit., 8.14.

16. Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. Technological Literacy: What Industry Can Offer. Ideas for Action in Education and Work. Portland, Ore.: Northwest Regional Education Laboratory, November 1984, 1-8.

17. Op. cit., 86.

18. Wilson, Bruce L. and Gretchen B. Rossman. Collaborative Links with the Community: Lessons from Exemplary Secondary Schools. The Phi Delta Kappan, June 1986, 710.

19. The Indianapolis News, June 8, 1988. Cited in Partners in Education. Partners in Education. Indianapolis: Chamber of Commerce, undated.

20. Partners in Education. Goals. Needs. Resources. Indianapolis: Chamber of Commerce, 1988.

21. Op. cit., 87.

22. Wanat, John, and Margaret Snell. Cooperative Vocational Education. Springfield, Ill.: Charles Thomas, 1980.

23. Op. cit., 88.7

Appendix A

How business benefits from partnership

Partnerships provide opportunities for business to:

1. Communicate the needs of business to educators and students.
2. Present first-hand the requirements, satisfactions and expectations of the business world.
3. Relate to youth the importance of skills in the business world.
4. Increase awareness among students of needed careers and their requirements.
5. Develop more able consumers and producers.
6. Alert teachers to the skills job applicants lack and help find ways to develop these skills.
7. Help develop career awareness and vocational programs geared to specific local job markets now and in the future.
8. Provide state-of-the-art information.
9. Upgrade skills of employees through use of school facilities.
10. Evaluate its own problems in light of how another system deals with them.
11. Gain better understanding of the community's educational system and its needs.
12. Build support for schools among employees.
13. Become known as a business concerned about the community.
14. Acquire marketing information.
15. Provide daycare services for their employees in conjunction with the school's child development or home economics courses.
16. Use physical fitness and athletic facilities of the school partners.
17. Provide employees with entertainment, cultural and athletic events.
18. Learn methods of teaching for the instruction of employees.
19. Try out presentations to the "toughest audience" -- young people.
20. Enhance planning and management skills of the employees.

Source: List provided by Indiana Partners in Education Program

Appendix B

A principal's "wish list"

"When principals were asked to indicate the types of support they would most like in the future, they expressed needs in the following areas:"

More student awards, scholarships and books (52 percent).

Donations: computers, equipment, books (45 percent).

Guest speakers, use of partners' facilities or equipment (39 percent).

Academic tutoring of students (33 percent).

Assistance for students with special needs (26 percent).

Grants for teachers (23 percent).

Professional development of school staff (23 percent).

Work-study or summer jobs for students (19 percent).

Special awards for teachers or schools (16 percent).

Partner employees as volunteer teachers (11 percent).

Service on education committees or task force (6 percent).

Source: National Center for Education Statistics. Education Partnerships in Public Schools. Department of Education, in press, 11. Cited in America's Schools.